Unlocking Kitchens
a chilshi fanzine

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March 28th — First entry | Spring Vegetable Slime Rolls

Hello there. This journal was a gift to me after my last one got destroyed in my latest dungeon exploration. A lot of my newer recipes are now lost so I will have to start over in some regards.

In my recent travels, I have discovered new ways to utilize dried slime. I came across a town in the South East, where they compacted various meats and vegetables into a nice compact roll. Much like a dumpling. The wrapper was made with rice paper, and it had a very gelatinous texture. I noticed they made their rice paper the same way I dry out slimes.

So, of course, after this discovery, I needed to test it out myself. After I left, I came across a dungeon where I found a very luminous lake. Inside were various large crustacean monsters. After fishing for a bit, I boiled and chopped them up. I had a head of lettuce and a carrot. so I rolled all of these ingredients inside the slime wrapper. The townspeople also provided me with a sauce made from their local chilis. It does have quite a kick to It.

I am so happy to have found that town. They showed me ways I could improve recipes and use my current ingredients for something entirely new.

April 4th — Mandrake Stew

Today, I came across a lot of mandrakes in another dungeon. Decided to make a stew with them. It may be getting hotter, but there's never a better time for a hot bowl of stew. I may have a lot of leftovers with this one. Not many to share it with sadly. I do miss our old adventuring party. It was nice sharing my meals with people.

Ingredients:

- Chopped mandrakes (Cut them horizontally so you can get the most circular bits)
- Wild Mushrooms
- Onion Chopped
- Water
- Red Wine

April 29th — Wild Boar Sandwiches

After I finished exploring the dungeon, I found myself on the same path as Chilchuck. He mentioned he would be doing some trading down south later this year, but I didn't expect to see him. I decided to join him on his journey back to his home village. It was nice seeing him again. And of course cooking for him. The delight on his face filled me with so much warmth and joy. I guess I was a wee bit lonely exploring for this past year.

I should really catch up with the others. Laois, after all, has made big strides as a new king. At least, that's what Chilchuck says. He's been more in contact with the others.

For dinner, I made some sandwiches of some wild boar meat I found in the dungeons. Chilchuck had some bread rations and vegetables to spare. I decided to roast the boar on a spit over the fire. Seasoning with the herbs surrounding our campsite.

Ingredients:

- Roasted boar meat cut into thin slices
- Two slices of bread
- Two twigs of wild herbs
- Lettuce leaf
- Chopped mushrooms

May 8th

After about a week of traveling, we finally made it to his village. It's my first time being in a half foot village so a lot of it is very new to me. The spaces are quite small compared to what I am used to. I never

considered myself tall or large, especially around other races, but here I feel a bit cramped.

Chilchuck introduced me to his daughters. Meijack, Flertom, and Puckpatti. They all seem like hard working girls. It was pleasant meeting them for the first time. I don't plan to stay long here, but I hope to see them again soon.

May 17th — Weird New Creatures

After my stay with Chilchuck, I embarked on a short journey to a nearby cave that was once a dungeon. I don't understand why it stopped being a dungeon, the locals weren't very descriptive in their stories about it. Nonetheless, I explored it for a while. I couldn't find any type of ruins or monsters for most of my trip.

I did find a colony of weird looking slugs. They seemed rather large and had what appeared to be arms. They could grab and throw things. I certainly got hit with a couple of sharp sticks by them; they seemed rather large and very territorial. I came across a very plump and large one. He was very beautiful looking. It made me curious as to how they would taste. They looked amphibious on the outside, but the way they moved made me think they were more mammal-like. It was quite interesting to see.

Perhaps they would make a great stew.

May 18th — Chilchuck's Birthday

After my journey into the cave, I decided to say goodbye to Chilchuck, again. I happened to stumble in on his birthday. I was delighted to participate in the festivities that his daughters put together. I did feel a bit bad showing up without any notice. Nonetheless, it was a fun time.

Late in the evening, we snuck away from the party and shared what was left of the cake and wine. Chilchuck fancies ale more, but his daughters spent a lot on this special wine so he didn't want it to go to waste. It had a very rustic flavor. Somehow, it reminded me of Chilchuck in the dungeon. He was very fast and particular about his work. I marveled at his skills during that time. He opened up my world to an entirely new skill set. He truly is fascinating.

May 26th — Shopping Trip with Chilchuck

Chilchuck has been kind enough to let me stay at his house for awhile. I don't mind the constant traveling, but it's nice to be with someone familiar. As payment for my stay, I have been cooking for him. Today, we went shopping together. Chil has decided to join me this time around.

It really shocks me how much he hasn't done before. When looking at fish, he just got the first one he saw! I couldn't believe my eyes. I quickly returned the fish since it seemed to have been a few days old. It was quite hard trying to exchange it. But good fish is always worth it.

Recipe tonight was two whole baked branzinos with various local vegetables and a spicy tomato sauce on top. Chilchuck ate the whole fish. It's quite amusing seeing him enjoy normal food for once.

June 2nd — Hot Summer Days Ahead

As the summer solstice nears, so does the impending doom. And by that, I mean the unforgiving heat of the summer. It is already scorching hot on certain days, I can't imagine what it will feel like at its peak. Chilchuck swears it's like this every year, the summer here.

I tried an assortment of some local fruits. My favorite of the fruits had a soft velvety skin and a mushy inside. Its skin sparkled with a gradient of reds and yellows. It was like looking at the summer sun set. Truly magnificent. It reminds me a bit of Chil's face. The way his auburn hair shades his rosy pale skin. Just like a summer sunset.

June 30th — Chilchuck's Adventure

I was feeling a bit cramped in this town and felt like I needed a change of pace. Chilchuck took me on a little adventure to the nearby mountains. He says he used to come here all the time when he was a teenager. There was a nice creek in the mountains. It was fun seeing Chilchuck be so playful and adventurous. He's seemed to have been very stressed these past few weeks about something. I was happy that he could take me on such a nice outing.

October 2nd — My Birthday

When was the last time I stayed in one place this long? I didn't even notice how long I had been staying in the village until the air became cooler. The fall harvest began a while ago, and of course, it is my birthday today. It's quite strange. A year has passed since that crazy adventure. I can't believe how much I have changed. Staying with Chilchuck for so long has made me realize how much I missed people, missed having companions. The time I spent with the Toudens, Marcille, and Izutsumi also turned the key in that lock.

So begins another year of my life. I'm glad I could spend it with so many new people. I hope I can spend more and more time with them. I hope I can spend more time with Chilchuck.

November 30th — Laois and Falin's Birthday Bash

It had been so long since I had seen Laois and Falin. Coincidentally, their birthdays fall near each other. They decided to hold a big party the week of both for the kingdom to enjoy festivities. After all, it is their king's birthday. After the bigger party, me and Chilchuck stayed to have a smaller get together. It was nice seeing them all again. I had missed it.

December 5th — Winter Market

Ever since we visited everyone again, Chilchuck has been acting weird. He seems more aloof when I talk to him, like his mind is elsewhere. I thought he was stressed about something so I decided to take him on an outing. His village was holding a special winter market in the evening today. There was music and dancing as well as many food stalls. It was quite a sight.

After enjoying some warm cider together, he seemed to relax more. I cracked a few jokes to continue this happy mood. I realized it had been awhile since I had heard him laugh. His laughter is unlike any I have heard. It's loud and raspy. Like a wisened oak mug that gets better with age. The huskiness you hear in the back of his throat as he breathes for air again. It grounds me.

December 30th — The New Year Starts Now

Something happened today. Something I never expected. I still can't believe it happened. It's the end of the year now. Reflecting now on my previous entries, I realize I have been quite busy. And quite lonely. I have become so accustomed to living alone I forgot what it's like to be with a group of people and stay with them. And to keep coming back to them.

I guess that's why I said yes to Chilchuck today. Today is the end of the year. People have parties and make plans. Me and Chilchuck simply stayed in our company. It was nice. This whole month something had been off about him. But today, he seemed more relaxed. And now I finally know why. He had made up his mind. He asked for me to stay with him forever.

Not as a marriage proposal, but he did confess to having romantic feelings for me. It was a lot to take in. I had never been confessed to like that. It was odd. I didn't hate it though. And I certainly don't hate the idea of staying with Chilchuck—together. I made sure he knew that. This past year, Chilchuck has become a very important part of my life. I don't want to lose that life.

So I have decided to stay with Chilchuck, stay by his side. I want to be with him. I want to go on more adventures together. I want to share my meals with him. It's what I want right now. And I'm excited to see where this takes me over the next year.

May we survive and thrive together.

Peach

Welcome

by: Senna

"What did you say you needed chopping? The carrots?"

Flertom looked up from the stove, where she was stirring a simmering pot, and said, "You don't need to, I can—"

Chilchuck fixed her with a stare. She stared a challenge back, but gave up the effort almost immediately. "Yes, please," she said.

The comfortable sounds of cooking settled over the kitchen seat and began working.

"So, when did you learn to get so good at that?" she asked over her shoulder after a minute.

"At what? Cutting vegetables?" he asked, scraping the first slices to the side of the cutting board and beginning on the second carrot.

"Hm… maybe," she said. "Cooking. Helping."

"Helping?" he repeated, pausing his work and looking up at her.

"Sorry, maybe that's the wrong word." She tapped excess sauce from the spoon and set it aside before turning to her father. "I guess I was just thinking you learned some new skills down in the dungeon lately."

"Like helping and chopping carrots," Chilchuk repeated flatly, just barely managing to keep a straight face.

Flertom crossed gracefully to take the seat across from him. "I didn't mean it like that," she said earnestly. "Really."

"Right, right." He'd definitely drop the facade if he looked her in the face so he focused on the next carrot.

"I mean it." Fler had taken so much more of her personality from her mother than from him. "I'm just worried about how things are going to go when Senshi gets here."

His attention whipped from the food prep to her so fast he nearly cut himself. "What?"

"You said he's a cook, right? Are you sure this food is going to be good enough for him?"

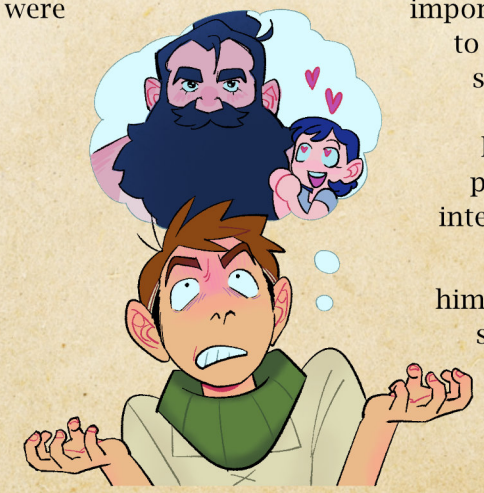
Oh. That. Chilchuck smiled. "I'm sure he'll love it," he said. "But why are you so worried about this?"

"What if he doesn't like it though?" She pinned him with that innocent gaze. "What if he never wants to come back?"

"It's not like he's a customer," Chilchuck replied, now baffled. "He's just visiting, so if he doesn't want to come back to the house, it's fine."

"It's not. No one's getting any younger after all, and the way you talk about him, it seems like he's a really good person, so—"

"Wait, wait." When Chilchuck had invited Senshi to visit, he'd invited his daughters as well because… well, because they were important to him. He wanted them to meet Senshi. But now he was starting to wonder if he hadn't made a mistake. He knew she had her preferences. "Why are you so interested?"



"You're always talking him up," Fler said, tone seemingly innocent but there was a little smile that he wasn't sure he trusted. "So I just thought—"

"He's too old for you!" he blurted out, finishing chopping the last carrot and pushing the cutting board across the table.

"—for *me*?" she repeated, but, face burning, Chilchuk was already out of the chair and hurrying out of the kitchen.

Oh, he was a fool.

Flertom had never been exactly subtle about the dwarf husband thing, but he hadn't been thinking about Senshi as a dwarf, he was just… just Senshi. The idea that one of his own daughters might be looking at this as some kind of dating opportunity hadn't even crossed his mind. Clearly it should have.

Was it too late to—

"Dad?"

He turned to see Puckpatti running a cloth over a small table near the door with an air of finality. Then she grinned at him. "I think this is the cleanest this house has been since Mom was here."

Despite his lingering anxiety, he chuckled his agreement. He'd finally come to terms with the end of that relationship—the ghost of their time together no longer haunted the house. And he was away too often to be hung up on deep cleaning.

"It looks nice," he said. Then as though he could feel Marcille's eyes on him, added, "Thank you for the help."

"Of course," Puckpatti said. "And I'm really glad you invited us to meet your friend! Just make sure you keep it clean, okay?"

She was trying to give him a stern look, but she was going to need a decade's more experience to hone that look before it would work on him. "Why?" he asked, chuckling again.

"Well, if Senshi starts visiting more often—"

Her too?

"Wait, wait," he said, putting a hand on her shoulder. "I don't know what you're thinking, but-"

"Mom started dating again."

He withdrew his hand as though she'd suddenly grown hot to the touch. "Yeah?" he asked. The news didn't bother him, exactly, but why was she bringing it up out of the blue?

"And Uncle Senn and Aunt Jeid are worried. They say you don't take care of yourself."

He opened his mouth to argue the point, then closed it again and facepalmed instead. "And why are they talking to *you* about this?" he asked instead.

"Because we all think you deserve to be happy again," she said, smiling sweetly.

He… What?

And what did this have to do with Senshi?

"Tell them if they have something they want to say about me, to come say it to *me* instead next time, okay?" he said, sidestepping the question entirely.

"All right, but I—"

They were interrupted by knocking at the door. Grateful for the reprieve from trying to understand what his girls were thinking, Clikchuck went to answer it.

Senshi, he could at least understand. It was always nice to see him. Comfortable. Warm.

Senshi had brought a dessert. As he introduced the girls, Fler took the pie, Mei said the table was set, and everything finally started to fall into rhythm.

"So Meijack, I hear business is going well?"

"It's paying the bills," she replied around a mouthful of food. Her mother had despaired of teaching her manners. Chilchuck hadn't cared before, but tonight for some reason, he now wished he'd said something to her too.

"That's the most important thing," Senshi said, smiling warmly. "Keeping yourself fed and safe. Sounds like you're doing well."

Fler leaned forward, smiling and pushing her empty plate away. “So, can I ask what you do?”

Is she still going to try to hit on him? Chilchuck thought, mortified.

Not sensing Chilchuck’s thoughts, Senshi gave it some thought. “I guess you can call me a traveller,” he said. “All over the world, eventually. Seeing new places. Trying new things.”

“I bet you’ve seen some amazing sights,” Puckpatti said, rapt. Jeeze, these girls. Sure, Senshi was good looking, but—

“Things I never would have believed before Laios, Chilchuck, and the rest helped me expand my horizons,” Senshi agreed.

“That sounds nice,” Mei said. “You should take Dad.”

“Trying to get rid of me?” Chilchuck joked to try to prevent himself from dying of embarrassment at the hands of his brazen daughters.

“Am I wrong?” she asked, looping an arm over her chair’s back. “You two like each other right? I’ve never seen you so nervous as earlier today, and he keeps watching you—”

“Mei!” There was no joking out of this. Death by embarrassment it was.

“Uh… Dad?” Puck smiled tentatively at him. “*Is* she wrong? We all thought…”

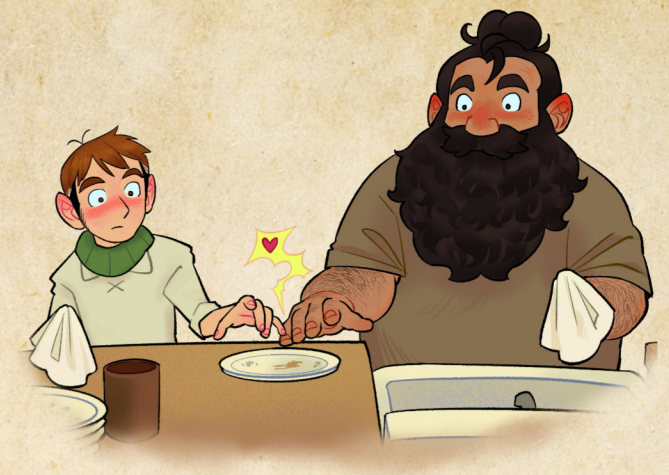
“Yeah,” Fler said grinning. “He’s a catch.”

“And you’re not getting any younger,” Mei pointed out

Chil stared from one girl to the next. His daughters, ganging up on him, saying… saying…

He needed some space.

“I’ll clean up!” he said, hopping to his feet, gathering a few dirty dishes and heading for the kitchen as fast as his remaining scraps of his dignity would allow.



He was in the midst of scraping the scraps into a compost bowl when he heard the door open. One of the girls, here to continue teasing their dad? He turned around, ready to scold them.

Only to find Senshi there, several plates in his arms.

“Oh,” Chilchuck said, the righteous indignation melting into the sort of awkward self-awareness that always felt like it would kill him someday. “Hey, Senshi. Sorry about…” He hesitated, considering what to say, and decided on, “How I acted just now.”

“Don’t worry about that,” Senshi said, stepping over to the sink and setting the dishes down. “Your daughters are fine young women and they mean well, but that would have surprised anyone.”

The pair fell into a quiet rhythm, one scraping the scraps while the other began washing each dish in turn. It was almost comfortable…

But also awkward as heck. Why was their guest doing chores? Why was Chilchuck letting it happen? What if his daughters made a bad impression on him? If he misunderstood?

“If they’re going to act like that, they can stay home and make their own dinners next time,” he grumbled.

"So next time it'll just be us?"

It was simply said, but something in Senshi's words made him think back, somehow, to Mei.

You two like each other right?

"You sure you want to come back here?" Chilchuck asked, re-scraping the current plate.

"I'm sure if you'll have me."

Have me? Chilchuck felt his ears start to burn.

"You're always welcome here, Senshi."

"That's right nice to hear." Senshi's hands slowed as he ran the washcloth over the current plate over and over. "And not to pry. But about what your daughters said—"

"What they said?" Chilchuck repeated, hoping his voice wasn't giving anything away.

"You were looking forward to my visit?"

"Of course!" Chilchuck said, looking over at Senshi, meaning to assure him if he did have the wrong idea.

Senshi met his gaze with the almost maddeningly calm one he used way too often for Chilchuck's taste. "And is that as a friend and adventuring companion?"

There was a weight in that question. "Well… yeah," Chilchuck said. Looking away, eyes searching for everything but Senshi's face. He thought about Mei. Her words. What she'd seen.

What he felt.

"But maybe not… only that," he admitted. Then, as though the motion could eliminate the awkwardness of admitting something like that out loud, he began frantically scraping the second to last plate.

They once more worked in silence for a bit. Senshi broke it this time.

"There's this place on the west edge of the continent. A little town that makes the most amazing smoked fish you've ever tasted. And if ye've a mind, there's a spot where the sunset colors are more brilliant than anything I've ever seen. I'd love to show you."

"What use would a lockpick and trapfinder be on a trip to see a sunset?" Chilchuck asked.

"Not looking to ask a lockpick. Just you."

Chilchuck mentally groped for an answer. He wasn't good with saying feelings out loud.

How did Senshi make it sound so natural?

"I'm serious," the dwarf continued. "I know you have your business and home here. But if you want, there are things I want to show you. While we can."

Chuckling, Chilchuck said, "I'd like that. I'd like to spend some time with you. Just with you. I'm sure the girls agree."

"Girls?" Senshi repeated, puzzled. With a slight smirk, Chil spun toward the kitchen door, which was cracked open. They both heard a squeak and then three sets of feet hurrying away.

"They're trying to chaperone us?" Senshi asked, chuckling.

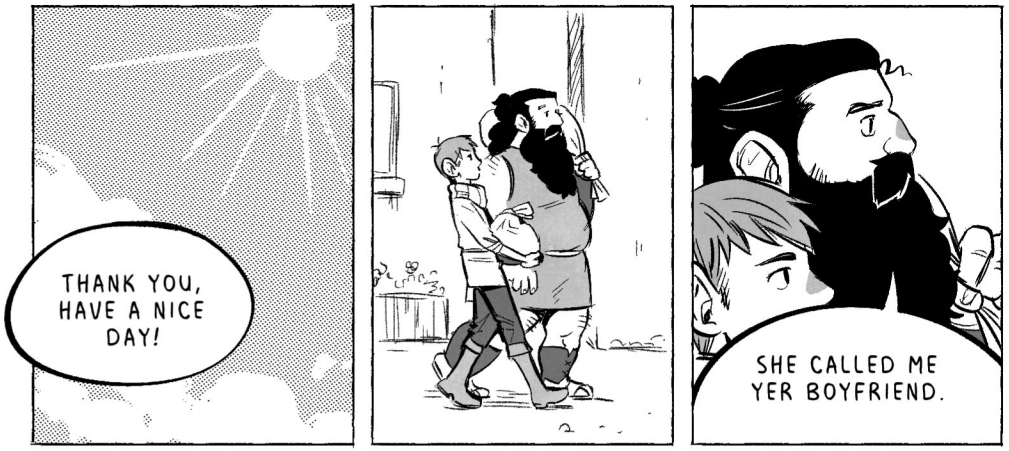
"More like they're snooping," Chil replied fondly, sliding the last plate over to Senshi. As he went to pick it up, their hands touched.

The right, safe thing would be to pull away. But for just a few seconds, he couldn't bring himself to do it. There was a warmth that spread from their contact, nerve-wracking but also pleasant in a way he hadn't felt in a long while.

Maybe he hadn't thought about it before. But now that he had?

He found he wanted to grab this opportunity with both hands and never let go.

TAP TAP


THANK YOU, HAVE A NICE DAY!
SHE CALLED ME YER BOYFRIEND.

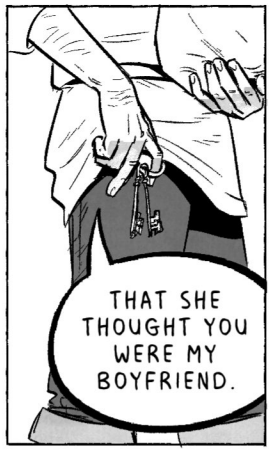
SHE DID.
YE DIDN'T DENY IT.
DO I NEED TO? THAT'S OUR BUSINESS.
OH, YEAH?
YEAH.
SO...
SO, WHAT?

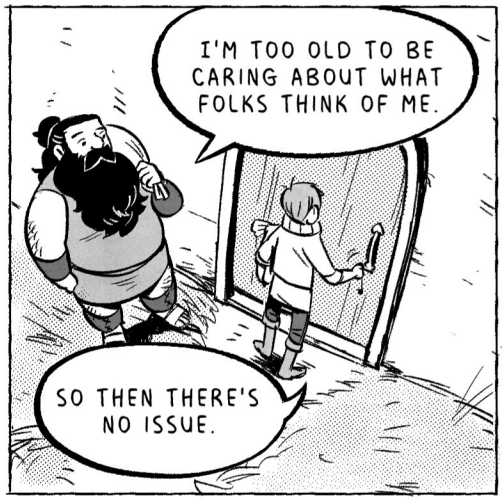
DO YE MIND IF I ASK WHAT OUR BUSINESS IS?

...
...

DID IT BOTHER YOU?

DID WHAT BOTHER ME?


THAT SHE THOUGHT YOU WERE MY BOYFRIEND.


I'M TOO OLD TO BE CARING ABOUT WHAT FOLKS THINK OF ME.
SO THEN THERE'S NO ISSUE.

BUT—
BUT...?

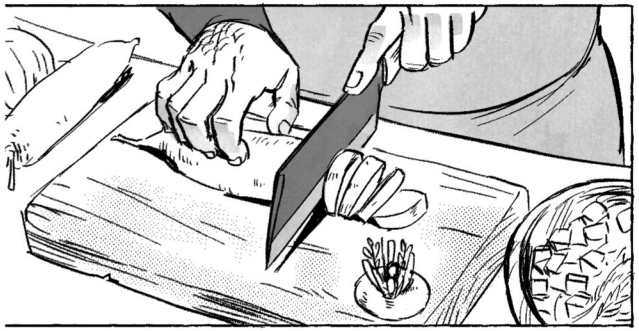
YOU MUST CARE ABOUT WHAT *SOME* FOLKS THINK.

LIKE— ME, FOR EXAMPLE.
Paf

YE CAN THINK WHAT YE WANNA THINK.

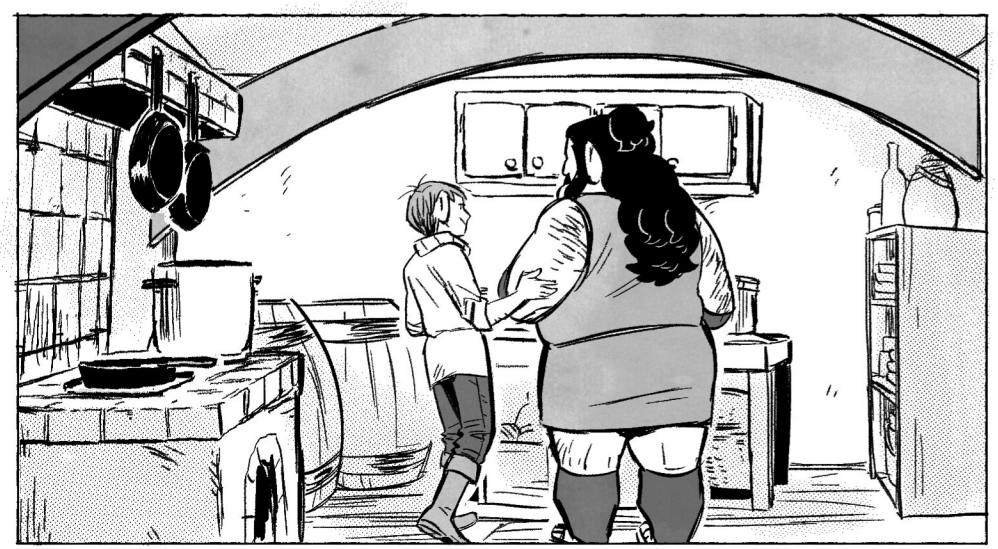
LISTEN...
I'M NOT GOOD AT.. TALKING.
ABOUT THIS. YOU KNOW THAT.

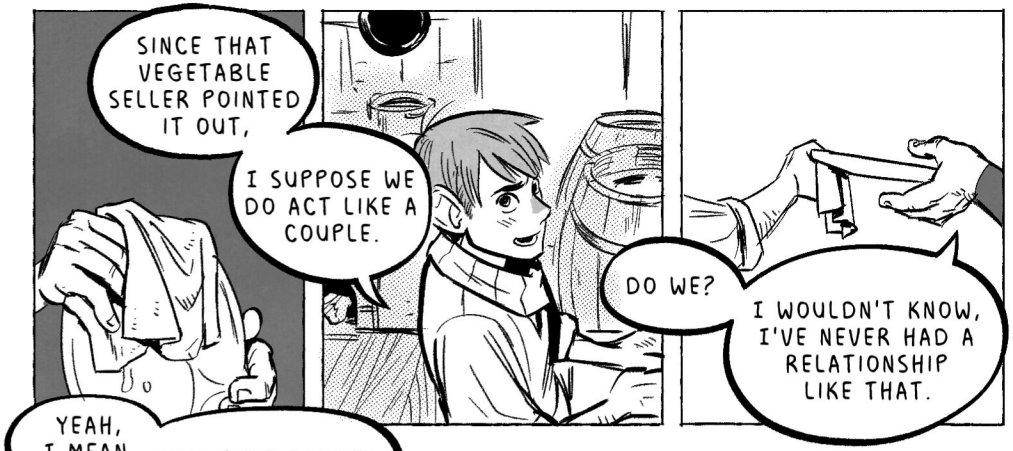
YOU'VE GOTTEN BETTER.
I HAVE! AND I OWE PART OF IT TO YOU.



Y'KNOW, THIS *IS* PRETTY DOMESTIC, ISN'T IT?

I'LL GET STARTED ON THE DISHES.



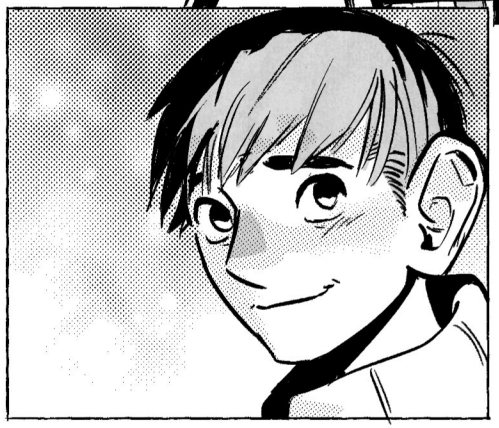

SINCE THAT VEGETABLE SELLER POINTED IT OUT,
I SUPPOSE WE DO ACT LIKE A COUPLE.
DO WE?
I WOULDN'T KNOW, I'VE NEVER HAD A RELATIONSHIP LIKE THAT.

YEAH, I MEAN,
YOU JUST COOKED DINNER FOR ME.
I COOK FOR EVERYONE.
YOU'VE BEEN LIVING WITH ME FOR A WHILE NOW, HAVEN'T YOU?
YOU KNOW WHERE ALL MY DISHES GO
I HAVEN'T OVERSTAYED, HAVE I?
OF COURSE NOT.
EVEN THE GIRLS LOVE YOU.

NONE OF THAT IS EXCLUSIVE TO... TO *ROMANCE*, IS IT?
NO. BUT IT *CAN* BE ROMANTIC.

IT FEELS DIFFERENT.
I S'POSE YE'D HAVE MORE EXPERIENCE WITH THAT SORT OF THING.
WELL, IN *MY* EXPERIENCE...

I'VE LEARNED THAT
IF YOU WANT SOMETHING, YOU HAVE TO BE CLEAR.
AND I'M DONE WAITING.



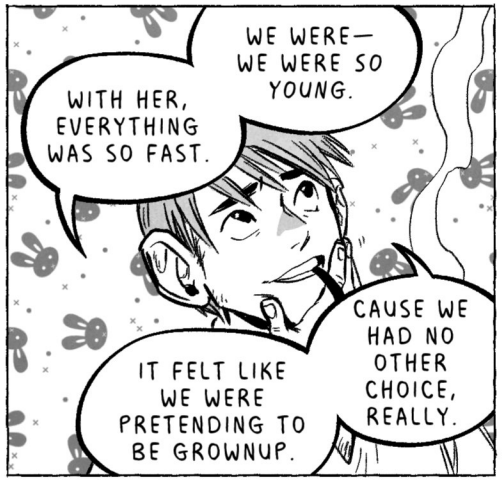
I KNOW BETTER THAN TO SPOIL A GOOD THING.
BUT INGREDIENTS WILL SPOIL ANYWAY, EVEN IF YOU NEVER COOK THEM.

THAT'S NOT A KIND WAY TO TALK ABOUT YOUR WIFE.
H-HEY!!

JUST TO BE CLEAR,
I WAS TALKING ABOUT YOU, Y'KNOW.

HMM. YOU'RE A LOT DIFFERENT THAN MY WIFE WAS, THOUGH.

...HOW D'YA MEAN?


WE WERE— WE WERE SO YOUNG.
WITH HER, EVERYTHING WAS SO FAST.
CAUSE WE HAD NO OTHER CHOICE, REALLY.
IT FELT LIKE WE WERE PRETENDING TO BE GROWNUP.

BUT WITH YOU... WE JUST SORTA GREW INTO EACH OTHER'S LIVES.
WE'RE A COUPLE OF OLD GUYS, BUT NEITHER OF US ARE IN A HURRY, Y'KNOW?

YE SAY THAT...

BUT IF MARCILLE SAW THE WAY YA SMOKE
SHE'D SAY YOU'RE IN A RUSH TO DIE EARLY.

PFF- BWA HAHA!!

SEE, THIS IS WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT.

WHAT?

WE'RE ALREADY SWAPPING SPIT, EH?

SO ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME...
THAT WE

CUT OUT THE MIDDLE MAN?
END.

Credits

Attila
Zine Host
mirroredgiraffe
mirroredgiraffe
mirroredgiraffe

AKnightOfAGoodKing
Writing/Socials Mod
the-kings-of-games
the-kings-of-games
flame_chiyo

FerretFace
Wrtier | *pg 9 - 15*
Ferret-milk
FERRET-Face

Senna
Writer | *pg 20 - 27*
Senna_B
ensignsenna

Maria-Ruta
Spot Artist | *pg 10 -15*
maria-ruta
maria-ruta

Cosmignon
Merch Artist
cosmignon
cosmignon_sd
cosmignon

Strawbeaniie
Merch Artist
strawbeaniie
strawbeaniie
strawbeaniie

Seagiri
Cover Artist
seagiri
_seagiri

Fin
Page Artist | *pg 6*
inurclosets

Litamaco
Page Artist | *pg 7*
capt_litamaco
captain-litamaco

Louiekablooey
Page Artist | *pg 8*
louiekablooey
louiekablooey
louiekablooey

PeachSodah
Page Artist | *pg 16 - 17*
Peachsodah
peach-sodah

Buniix3
Page/Spot Artist | *pg 18, 20 - 25*
Buniix3
Buniix3
Buniix3

Zuz
Page Artist | *pg 19*
whimsizuz
whimsizuz

EdieHhil
Page Artist | *pg 28 - 29*
ediehhil
ediehhil
ediehhil

sabertoothwalrus
Comic Artist | *pg 30 -39*
sabertoothwalrus
sabertoothwalrus

To all lovers of the delicious world of Dungeon Meshi, food, and Chilshi, thank you for your love and patience as we brought this project into fruition. Just for you, we created Unlocking Kitchens with over 40 pages of fanart and fanfiction from a lot of passionate and skillful artists and writers, brought together to celebrate the relationship between Chilchuck and Senshi. The mod team, though small, is immensely grateful for all of their hard work, because without each and every one of them, this book would be like meat without salt, curry without spice, a meal without friends—friends like our supporters and readers, such as you.

With great joy, we hope this small little project fills you your cup and your hearts.

- Chilshi Zine Mod Team

Unlocking Kitchens

a chilshi fanzine